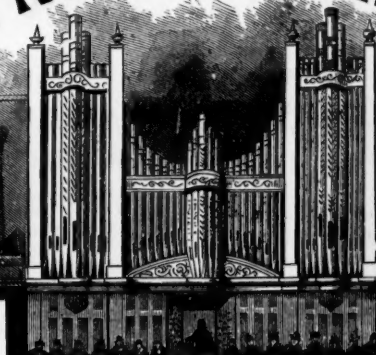


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A Monthly Record

EDITED BY
E. MINSHALL.

No. 98.—FEBRUARY, 1896.

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Our Competitions.

THE offer of a prize for the best "Amen" to be sung after the Benediction has evidently inspired our readers, for many compositions have reached us. The prize has been awarded to

Mr. JAMES LYON,
St. Michael's College,
Tenbury.

The following are commended: "Benediction," "Alpha," "Alla Breve," "Christobel," "Laudator temporis acti."

Our Next Competition.

WE offer a prize of One Guinea for the best *Congregational Setting* of the Lord's Prayer. It must be very simple and short, being intended as a substitute for the frequent mumbling when the prayer is "said." The conditions are as follows:

1. Compositions must be sent to our office not later than March 1st, 1896.
2. Each composition must be marked with a *nom. de plume*, and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope, containing the name and address of the composer.

3. The successful composition shall become our copyright on payment of the prize.

4. Unsuccessful compositions will be returned if stamped addressed envelopes are sent us for that purpose.

5. We reserve the right to withhold the prize should we consider there is no composition of sufficient merit or suitability.

6. Our decision in all matters relating to the competition shall be final.

The jubilee of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" falls due this year. In commemoration of this event a "History of Mendelssohn's 'Elijah,'" by Mr. F. G. Edwards, will shortly be published by Novello and Co. Mr. Edwards is an authority on all matters relating to this great composer, so we may expect an interesting volume, especially as it will contain much original information.

Here is a new organ-blower story for the truth of which we can vouch. Adjudicating recently at an organ-playing competition, one of the competitors afterwards explained to us that he did not play as well as he ought to have done, because he was nervous about the blower. It seems that while practising on the organ beforehand, the blower was kind enough to explain to the performer that a great deal depended upon the man at the bellows, and that if he would give him a "tip," the blowing should be such as would no doubt secure the prize. This suggestion was declined, with the result that the player was in constant dread of the wind running out. He, however, got the prize.

To pull through a musical examination is a difficult matter to some people. Here is a novel method discovered by one person at least. At a recent examination at Trinity College, two ladies in charge of two of the candidates were in the waiting-room. Said one, "Have you been to Westminster Abbey this morning?" "No. Why?" was the reply. "Don't you believe in the communion of saints?" said the first speaker, adding, "My daughter and I have been to Edward the Confessor's tomb this morning to gain inspiration for the examination." Whether the visit to the shrine had the desired effect we know not; probably an hour with her text-books would have been more useful to the candidate.

Mr. Stead, with his usual enterprise, proposes to bring out a Penny Hymnal for the People; at the outset he wrote to the "foremost people of our time" asking them to say what particular hymn had been most helpful to them. The Prince of Wales replied, "There is none more touching, nor one that goes more truly to the heart than 'Nearer, my God, to Thee.'" Many "Men of the World"—as Mr. Stead terms them—declined to be drawn on the subject, while bishops and ministers, and a few others have pretty fully replied. We

shall be interested to see the Hymnal when it appears.

We are glad to hear that applications for books of music for the Crystal Palace N.C.U. Festival on June 13th are coming in fast. We would repeat what we have often said before, viz., to prevent disappointment, those who require books should make early application to the Hon. Sec., Mr. T. R. Croger, 114, Wood Street, London, E.C. The books are one shilling each.

For the information of those who do not at present belong to the Union, we may say that any Nonconformist choir can join. There are no fees of any kind, but the choirs have to purchase their music and pay their own expenses to and from London. A free return ticket from London to the Crystal Palace (including admission) is provided. We may add that the various railway companies carry *bona fide* singers to London at specially cheap rates.

Passing Notes.

ARE we justified under any circumstances in interfering with the works of the great masters who are no longer living to defend themselves? Mr. Midgley, of Bradford, thinks we are. In a paper which he read at the recent conference of the I.S.M. he endeavoured to show that Beethoven must have felt himself hampered by the five-octave keyboard of his day, and from that circumstance argued that we should now have "a thoroughly consistent and logical edition" of the pianoforte sonatas, in which Beethoven's original ideas should be carried out. He would be a daring man who should even attempt to decide what Beethoven's "original ideas" were in any given instance; but, apart from that, the very principle of alteration is one which should not for a moment be entertained. In Beethoven's special case, perhaps one might allow the extension of octave passages where it can be clearly seen that the composer would have so written if the keyboard of his day had been of the same compass as ours. But beyond this it is impossible to go; for if you once entertain the principle of alteration, you open the way for all sorts of perversions of the text by all sorts of irresponsible people. Mr. Midgley was candid enough to tell his hearers that the late Sir Charles Hallé had once said to him that he was quite satisfied with Beethoven as written by Beethoven, and for his part would not alter a single note. Most people fortunately agree with Hallé in that view of the matter, and it is comforting to find that the I.S.M. have declined to "add one more to the laurels it has already one" (the words are Mr. Midgley's) by undertaking a tinkered edition of the great master.

Professor Prout addressed some wise words to young composers and students of instrumentation in the paper which he delivered before the Conference on the development of the orchestra during the present

century. After having reminded his hearers that with the exception of the bass clarinet and the tuba, there is no instrument in the scores of *Lohengrin* and *Tristan* that is not to be met with in the works of Haydn and Mozart, the Professor remarked that the tendency of these later days is all in the direction of a richness and a fulness in the orchestra, which too often amounts to mere noise. The younger generation of musicians are fed so largely on the highly seasoned diet provided by modern composers that they have little or no taste for the simple fare offered by the old masters. They are not content with moderate resources, but must attack everything, even the simplest theme, with the whole artillery of the orchestra. The question is, first of all, of course, an artistic one; but it has at the same time a very practical bearing. The composer by his deplorable waste of material enhances very greatly the cost of production, and consequently lessens in many cases his chances of a hearing. As a writer in the *Scotsman* points out, we have reached a stage in this country at which even our smaller choral societies can no longer perform a modern cantata with mere piano or organ accompaniments. Yet if the orchestration of such works is to be adequately rendered, the cost involved in engaging competent instrumentalists is almost certain to greatly exceed the profits of the concert. It is not argued that the young composer should altogether forsake the highest orchestral paths. But the whole literature of chamber music, and indeed much of the literature of the best composers of orchestral music, is a protest against the theory that a deep impression can only be produced by the multiplication of instruments. If the young composer would take for his models not the most modern scores, but the scores of such masters of reserve as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, he would not only improve his work, but would at the same time make it possible for the public to hear his new compositions more frequently than they do now.

By the way, in the course of his lecture, Professor Prout gave us a very good, and I think a new anecdote about Berlioz, which all the Professor's reporters seem to have missed. He was speaking of Beethoven, and had occasion to refer to a certain passage for the double basses in one of the master's scores. It was considered a very difficult passage by the players of those days, and when Halévy came to conduct a performance of the work in Paris, he ordered it to be taken, not by the double basses, but by the 'cellos. This rather annoyed Berlioz, who was present at the performance, and when he next met Halévy he asked him when he was going to give that passage to the double basses as Beethoven intended. "Never so long as I live," said Halévy. "Well, we'll wait," replied Berlioz; "don't let it be long." Berlioz was as witty in his own way as Sidney Smith.

In a recent number of that high-class American monthly, *Music*, a lady contributor enters a very strong "Plea for keeping time." It is a subject which certainly demands some special attention in these days when so many people are beginning to think that they are play-



ing with expression when they are simply playing *out of time*. Think of what the exquisite *tempo rubato* of poor Chopin suffers from these would-be expressive players! The lovely nocturnes are sentimentalised beyond recognition, while the waltzes too often remind one of a bicycle race, with every now and then an unlucky "header." And as with Chopin, so in a lesser degree with other composers, especially with those of the so-called "romantic" school. The idea seems to have taken hold in many quarters that without sudden and startling changes of time a performance is lifeless and mechanical; and so we have *accelerandos* and *retardandos* which were probably never dreamed of by the composers. The writer referred to lays down the principle that, unless expressly marked by such words as *ad libitum*, no change of time should be made which prevents a trained and attentive listener from counting the measure. That is certainly a logical position to take, but perhaps it is just a little too rigid. Every composer must leave something to the judgment of the performer, and so long as that judgment does not take the form of mere caprice there is little fear of exaggeration. In any case, it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the minds of players, and especially of young players, that abrupt and unreasonable changes of time distress the thoughtful, enrage the irritable, and disgust the critical. Furthermore, they jolt the minds of the listeners, so to speak, and divert their attention from the music itself to finding a new time basis. This is directly contrary to Herbert Spencer's law of economy of attention, which is a good rule for many things besides reading and study.

I trust that Mr. Hope-Jones' call for the invention of new names for organ stops is not going to have any serious result in that way. What we need is not an addition to the names we already possess, but some uniformity on the part of organ-builders in the employment of these names. There is no fault to be found with the names at present in use if these names were only accurately descriptive of what they are intended to represent, and if only you could be sure that the kind of tone you get from one builder from a certain stop is the kind of tone you will get from a similarly named stop by another builder. But these are just the difficulties with which organists have to contend. I sympathise heartily with the correspondent who writes to say that a certain "Clarinet" stop which he had never previously tried made him quite spoil a piece in performance; the knob should have been marked "Tuba mirabilis"! Every player who "knocks about" a good deal among organs suffers from the want of system which exists in regard to the naming of stops. You will get a "Harmonic Flute" which is as unlike Cavaille-Coll's great invention as can possibly be imagined. You may get a "Spitz Flute" in which the pipes are actually cylindrical, whereas the word "Spitz" means conical. You will get a "Geigen Principal" without the faintest suspicion of the string quality of tone; and I have even met with a "Flute à Pavillon" stop without bells! No, we don't want new names, but we do very sadly want uniformity in the use of names.

A correspondent of a contemporary who has been a

regular attender at St. James's Hall for years, but who is now compelled to reside in the country, wants to know of "a mechanical device that would reproduce the string quartet, the pianoforte solo," etc. He would be quite satisfied to have his music faintly, or even without individuality or tone colour. Indeed, he is quite pathetic in his request for "*anything* to vary the monotonous bleating of the sheep on the hillside." It seems to me that a good mechanical piano is the very thing for this gentleman. Or perhaps he might even stand a bagpipe, if the player were put sufficiently far away—say among the sheep! But seriously, there should be no insuperable difficulty in meeting the request of the lonely enthusiast. Not long ago the pianist, Herr Theodore Bohlmann, in a letter printed in a German musical journal, told how he had played at Cincinnati, and by means of the long distance telephone had enabled some people at Pittsburg, four hundred miles away, to hear his entire programme. Not long ago a pianist in New York played for Theodore Thomas, who was in Chicago, and as a result was immediately engaged for one of the Chicago concerts. Of course this sort of thing is not likely to go very far. An audience likes to *see* its performers, and even Paderewski himself would fail to draw a crowd by sitting at home and playing the piano in his shirt-sleeves. Still, the country gentleman ought certainly to be considered. It is pitiful to be dependent on the sheep for one's music; even the bray of an honest donkey would be a diversion.

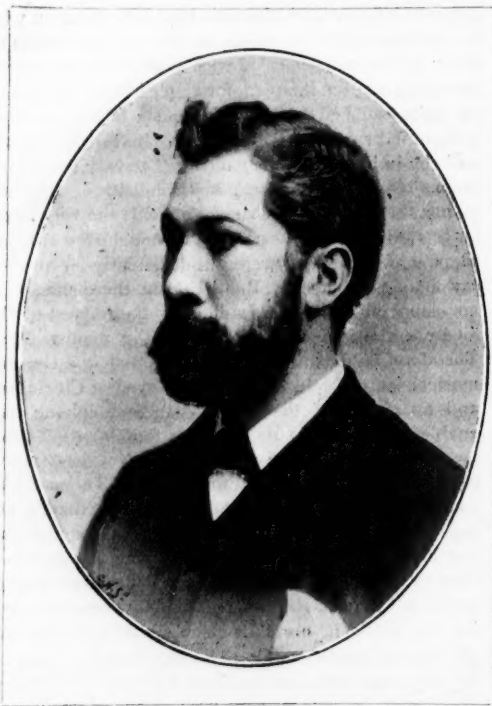
J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

TONIC SOL-FA CONVENTION.

THE Sol-faists believe—and rightly too—that frequent meetings for the reading of papers with musical illustrations, discussions, etc., are helpful to their work. The New Year's Convention was held on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th ult., at the Y.M.C.A. Hall, Aldersgate Street, London, when many well-known musicians took part in the proceedings. Interesting and useful papers were read on "Solo Singing," "Sight Singing," "Voice Training for Adult Classes," "Notes on Children's Voices," "The Leader of Church Praise and the Materials," "The Past and Present Position of Music in the Isle of Man," "A Retrospect of the Progress of Tonic Sol-fa in Wales," "The Madrigal, Glee, and Part Song." Sight-singing and Harmony Ear-test Competitions were held. There was also a Reception by the President, Mr. J. Spencer Curwen, and last but not least, a trip to some "Musical Haunts in London," the party being conducted by Mr. F. G. Edwards. This was an excellent programme, but there was too much for the time at disposal. If fewer topics had been introduced, and more time given to discussion, the result would probably have been more satisfactory.

Sol-faists have done, and will yet do, great things for Church Praise. We offer our warmest greetings and cordial good wishes to these enthusiastic and capable workers.

THE Tonic Sol-fa Association has resolved to invite Welsh choirs to give a performance of Mr. D. Jenkins' cantata *The Psalm of Life* at the annual Crystal Palace Festival, on July 11th. We understand considerable enthusiasm is being shown amongst the Welsh sol-faists in response to this compliment not only to themselves, but to one of the most popular Welsh composers of the present day.



Music at Horseferry Road Wesleyan Chapel, Westminster.

THE Wesleyan Chapel in Horseferry Road is, we believe, one of the finest and largest buildings in London in connection with Methodism. It is built in Gothic style, the handsome spire making it a landmark in the vicinity. The approach to the church from Victoria Street is not good. Passing through a narrow street leading out of the main thoroughfare, we found a very brisk Sunday morning trade going on in all kinds of provisions, tobacco, and sweets. Within a stone's throw of this noisy scene we came upon the chapel. Although it was within a moment or two of eleven o'clock, there was very little appearance of a large congregation.

Entering the gallery of the church, we took a back seat, but we were not allowed to remain there long, as one of a number of young men sitting in the front pews courteously invited us to go and sit with them. We accepted the invitation, and soon discovered that these young fellows were the students of the Wesleyan Training College, near the church, and that there were 105 of them present that morning. We naturally felt what a grand opportunity the minister of this church had, knowing that in a year or two these students would be teaching young life in all parts of the country.

While the opening voluntary was being played, we had time to observe the handsome proportions of the interior of the church. The elegant pulpit—or rather platform—with the fine stained-glass windows behind, and the neatly-decorated walls, give character to the place. The substantial

wooden roof, too, adds much to the beauty of the building.

The service opened with the hymn "Being of Beings, God of Love," which was sung to "Wiltshire." We noticed there was no choir, and before the first line was sung we realised that the singing was almost all tenor and bass. Literally we could not hear one treble voice in the whole place. Some of the students tried to sing the air; but the great majority of them sang either tenor or bass from notes. The effect of all this tenor and bass and no treble and alto was depressing. What a lost opportunity to get grand congregational singing!

After the opening hymn, the usual Liturgy was read by the minister. The congregation did not appear to enter into the spirit of it very heartily, the responses being feeble and halting. The *Venite* and *Te Deum* were sung to chants, but we cannot commend the singing as good chanting. It was throughout very unsteady and the words very indistinct.

At the close of the prayers, the hymn "Happy the man that finds the grace" was sung to "Confidence," a rather peculiar tune, but sung with some amount of vigour.

The sermon, from the text, "But wisdom is justified of all her children," was preached by the minister, the Rev. Thomas R. Pickering, an able and eloquent man. There was much pith and point in his discourse, and we were not surprised to hear that the students appreciate his ministry. Possibly Mr. Pickering's preaching would be rather more effective if he was not so rapid in his delivery. Many sentences we failed to catch, owing to his quick utterance.

The final hymn was "Happy the souls to Jesus joined," and, as "Evan" was the tune, there is no need to say it was heartily sung. After the Benediction, the people were dismissed with a well-played voluntary.

Several things struck us very forcibly in connection with this church. Why is there such a lamentably poor congregation? Besides the students already referred to, and about fifty children, there were not seventy persons in the place. The building itself is attractive, and it is situated close to both rich and poor in large numbers. There is something wrong somewhere. Such a chapel ought to be well filled.

We have said the Liturgy is used. From what we could gather, the students do not care for this part of the service. Almost all of them come from country Wesleyan chapels where it is not used, consequently they do not appreciate it. As they form the larger portion of the adult congregation, their wishes should be respected, and the Liturgy should not be forced upon them.

Why is there no choir? We very frequently hear of churches where the choir is uneven, owing to a lack of tenors and basses. In this church the students sing these parts remarkably well. Their voices are good, and they read correctly. With such a backbone, some of the finest choir-singing in London should be heard here. Is anything done to get trebles and altos? Why are the Sunday School children not taught to supply these

parts? In its present imperfect state, the singing is simply disgraceful. How the authorities can allow the Praises of God to be rendered in this fashion we cannot imagine. Is not this state of things to a large extent the cause of the scanty congregation? To us, and no doubt to many more, the present singing was anything but helpful. Before the place can be filled, a very different state of things musically must be arranged. To prevent misapprehension, let us repeat that with the singing of the students we were very much pleased, and if there had been equally good female voices, the service of praise would have been simply grand; but a heavy body of tenors and basses combined with a few men trying to shout out the melody is not very inspiring.

The nominal organist of the church is Dr. Dunstan (whose likeness we give). But, owing to great pressure of work, he is glad to get rest on Sundays, so only plays upon special occasions. As Professor of Music at the Training College he exercises his influence on the students. At the College, good musical work is done. Cantatas for male voices are in constant rehearsal, and Dr. Dunstan has arranged some church music especially for the students. We would urge Dr. Dunstan to bring his influence to bear upon the authorities of Horseferry Road Chapel to induce them to pay more attention to the Worship Music of the place. If that was done, and Dr. Dunstan played regularly, musical matters would be much more satisfactory.

Dr. Dunstan did not play on the occasion of our visit. Mr. Stones, one of the students, presided at the organ, and it is only due to him to say that he played in good style and with much expression. Mr. Howarth, another student, takes it in turn with Mr. Stones, and we learn he is also a very fair player. The organ is a three-manual instrument by Gray and Davison, of moderately good quality.

The possibilities of Horseferry Road Chapel are immense, and we earnestly hope that ere long the work may be in a much more flourishing condition. The present apathy and indifference on the part of those in authority must, however, give way to enthusiasm and earnestness before any change for the better can be expected.

SLEAFORD NONCONFORMIST CHORAL UNION.

THE Annual Concert of this Society was given in the Wesleyan School-room, on Thursday the 9th ult. The cantata chosen for performance was T. Mee Pattison's "The Ship of Life," which is composed of fifteen numbers comprising eight choruses, a duet for soprano and contralto, two tenor and two bass solos. Miss Chatwin gave the soprano solos with great ability. The same may be said of Miss Mary Higham, whose cultured contralto voice was heard to advantage in the duet with Miss Robinson, "Morning is gilding the sky," which was one of the sweetest numbers in the work. The tenor songs by the Rev. D. Rycroft were pleasingly rendered, and the solo and chorus "Homeward" received well-merited applause. Mr. Cleaver sang the bass solos, "With pennons," and "From mighty lands," in his usual excellent style and finish. The choruses were fairly balanced, the most pleasing being "The

tide is high," and "Come, let us lift our hearts." Miss Buttler ably presided at the piano, and Mr. J. Dodson conducted the choruses with his accustomed ability. After the cantata a miscellaneous selection was creditably given.

How to Accompany a Service.

BY FOUNTAIN MEEN,

Organist of Union Chapel, Islington, N.

THE heading of this article may perhaps lead some to expect that I am about to lay down the law as to what should and what should not be done by the organist in accompanying Divine service. Let me therefore at once say that I should consider it great presumption on my part to do so, and that I have no intention of making the attempt; but having been invited to contribute a short paper on the above subject, I shall endeavour to give the results of my own experience, which began upwards of thirty years ago. I propose firstly to say a few words on the accompaniment of the service, and secondly, on the selection of voluntaries.

It would, in my opinion, be a very great advantage if all ministers would adopt the plan of completing the announcement of the hymn, chant, or anthem *before* the tune or introduction is played over. The congregation should then rise, and having the key and rhythm of the tune fresh in their minds, they are ready to commence at once. On no account should a start be made until the people are standing, as it is impossible to secure unanimity and heartiness if the congregation come straggling to their feet during the first verse.

Now that most of the people have not only the words but the music before them, it is quite unnecessary to play the whole of a long tune over, unless, of course, it is unknown. The number of lines played must depend on the metre, and should end on either the Tonic or the Dominant, the latter not being at all objectionable if the singing is commenced almost directly. I once heard a portion ending on the Dominant played over, and then the chord of the key was played before starting the singing, the effect being quite ludicrous. It is most important that the tune or portion of it be played strictly in time, and exactly as written; the object of playing over being to show the congregation not only what is to be sung, but how it is to be sung. It is obvious that this is not the time for indulging in any fanciful solo effects.

With regard to the manner of starting, there have been many expressions of opinion, the majority of which seem to favour the plan of playing the treble note first. One writer has said, "There are very few churches where the organist goes splash on to the first chord of the tune," and I must unfortunately own that he is quite correct, for I do not remember one instance in a chapel and only a few in churches. Although I have listened attentively when attending other services, I have quite failed to discover any advantage arising from the use of the "initial note." For twenty-five years I have been in the habit of going "splash on to the first chord," so that I am one of the "very few." There need not be any difficulty, as it is only necessary that the organist and choir should come to a

definite understanding about the matter, and if they know that no "initial note" is to be given, they are on the alert, and begin immediately after the chord is played, at least, that is our experience at Union Chapel. It is of course quite impossible to obtain an absolutely unanimous start without a conductor; therefore, if the choir and congregation *must* start a little after the organ, what possible difference can it make whether they hear one note or a full chord? When we consider the ugliness of the single note (either Manual or Pedal), we can only wonder that it is so generally used.

I have great faith in maintaining a strict *tempo* throughout all hymns, excepting at the end of the last verse, where a slight *rallentando* may be made, and, as a rule, with good effect. I believe it is quite possible to get all desirable expression without interfering with the time, and I am quite sure that the singing will be far more hearty and effective.

As a general rule, it is wise to adopt a moderate speed when a large number of people are singing; it should certainly be slower than for a small choir, but the pace must, of course, depend partly upon the words and partly upon the character of the tune. It seems to me, for example, as impossible to sing "Nicaea" quickly, as it is to sing "Laudes Domini" slowly. In recommending strict time, I do not, of course, refer to those tunes which contain passages marked to be sung slower, as, for instance, "Vox Dilecti," where the first line should be sung deliberately, and the remainder quite strictly; also "Intercession," in which the refrain of each verse is set to a passage from "Elijah," and should be sung slower than the remainder of the tune; in fact, just as it is sung in the oratorio.

It sometimes happens that the first verse of a hymn or chant is marked *piano*. In such cases it is not wise to use a very soft organ, as, if there is any uncertainty about the start, it will be difficult to put matters right afterwards; the tone should be quiet, but firm. Later on, the organ may be reduced to almost any extent; and if the singing is going well, it produces an excellent effect to leave it unaccompanied for a time; only in doing so, the organist must be most careful not to let the pitch go down. The degree of power used in accompanying must depend upon the position of the organ and the amount of support required. Although a continuously loud accompaniment is, of course, most objectionable, the organist should not, on the other hand, be too reticent, for, in the majority of dissenting churches, the organ has to lead, as well as accompany, so that while the tone is constantly varied for the latter purpose, it should always be sufficiently firm for the former.

With regard to the use of *free accompaniments*, my own feeling is, that they should be used sparingly in congregational services; but when they are introduced with good taste and musicianly skill, the effect is very good, especially so if not too obtrusive and if not heard too often. I would strongly advise the organist who is not a fairly good theoretical musician, or who has not a special gift in this direction, to confine himself to the plain harmonies, as he cannot give offence by doing so; whereas if he attempts to do otherwise without

possessing the necessary aptitude, the result will most likely be disaster.

The Diapason tone is the most useful for leading and supporting the voices, and, as a rule, the loud reeds should be reserved for special effects; but this is a matter which must be left to the organist's good taste and judgment, for there are reeds and reeds. As it is my great privilege to play every Sunday upon a fine organ by Willis, I use my reeds much more freely than I should if playing on some other organs that I have heard. The possibility of obtaining fine contrasts of tone from a good organ is one of its chief characteristics, but it should always be borne in mind that very sudden and violent transitions from *Fortissimo* to *Pianissimo*, or *vice versa*, not only have a bad effect, but are likely to bewilder the congregation. Sometimes organists continue playing softly after the last chord; but, unless there is any special reason for it, such as showing strangers to seats, I much prefer holding the chord on a little and softening it off gradually.

All that I have said as to the accompaniment of hymns applies equally well to Chanting. After the chant is played over, a short pause should be made for the congregation to rise. The importance of this cannot be too strongly urged, and the organist should always wait (no matter how long) until the people are standing before he begins. But this, again, is a matter which will soon become understood by all, and the organist will not have to wait long.

With regard to the Anthem, in many churches it is sung by the choir only, and may be then accompanied according to the composer's directions, if any are given; but, when sung by the congregation, these frequently require considerable modification. It is often necessary to support the voices in passages which are intended to be sung without accompaniment; at such times the choir organ (without pedals) may be used with advantage.

In cathedrals and other churches it is usual for the organist to extemporize an introduction to the anthem, after it has been announced, which affords an excellent opportunity for the display of his inventive power, as well as his technical skill. Those who have had the privilege of hearing Dr. Hopkins' masterly introductions to the anthems at the Temple Church, know to what perfection they may be brought if the organist be a highly gifted composer, as well as player. It would not, however, be always acceptable or even desirable, to have a long organ solo in Dissenting Churches, at this part of the service, so a few bars either taken from the anthem or founded upon it, are, as a rule, sufficient.

Choice of Voluntaries.—Happily for present-day organists, they are, as a rule, free to play what they like both at the commencement and at the end of Divine service; but at the chapel I attended when a boy, it was not thought desirable to have any concluding voluntary, it being thought out of place after a service. It is to be hoped that this absurd idea has quite vanished, as now, not only are they quite general, but in many churches a large number of the congregation remain to hear them. This, of course, acts as an incentive to select the best music, and to render it in

the best possible manner, which is good for both organist and congregation, and I feel sure I express the sentiments of my brother organists when I say that we greatly value this growing appreciation of our efforts.

I now fancy I hear the question: Which do you prefer, arrangements for the organ, or original organ music? I unhesitatingly reply, organ music. We have nowadays an enormous supply of good music written especially for the instrument, and a great deal of it intended for service use. The works of Henry Smart, E. Silas, E. J. Hopkins, John Hopkins, E. T. Chipp, and Adolph Hesse would alone provide a large repertoire of music, admirably adapted for voluntaries, both before and after service. I have here mentioned just six of the most prominent names, but there are many other most excellent writers, both English and foreign.

I know that selections from oratorios are much in favour, but my own experience tells me that comparatively few vocal pieces make good instrumental solos. In the case of a continuous and beautiful melody, there is no objection, but where the song is cut up into short phrases, sometimes repeated over and over again, the effect is not good, in fact it is often absurd. For example, "O rest in the Lord" makes an admirable voluntary, and "He was despised" does not, for the reason given above. The same objection applies to many choruses. Fugue choruses usually make very good voluntaries, but those in which the same figure is constantly repeated in order to emphasize certain words (particularly in Handel's choruses), although full of grandeur when sung, have a directly opposite effect when merely played. It is only necessary to mention Handel's "Hallelujah" and "To Thee, Cherubim" as exactly illustrating my meaning—in the latter the figure to which the word "continually" is set, and which is highly effective when sung, sounds positively ridiculous when played. On the other hand, Beethoven's "Hallelujah," Handel's "We never will bow down" and "He trusted in God," make very fine voluntaries. There are, of course, several others, but I select these as aptly illustrating my remarks.

Regarding arrangements from symphonies or other instrumental works, there is no doubt that, considering the great number of movements that have been arranged, and in many cases most admirably so, comparatively few are useful as voluntaries, for the simple reason that, although perhaps arranged to perfection, they are not effective in performance. I would therefore strongly advise those who have not had much experience, to give their earnest attention to the works of the great masters, such as Bach, Mendelssohn, Rheinberger, Merkel, Lemmens, and Guilmant, together with those I have already named, giving "arrangements" the second place, and only using those which are really effective. They will then find no difficulty in interesting their hearers, and instead of "playing them out" will probably induce them to wait awhile.

The idea that people like to hear what is popular is, I fancy, carried much too far, and I certainly think that organists should banish from their repertoire anything which has gained a barrel-organ popularity. If we consider our opening voluntary to be the first item of

the service, rather than something to "play the people in," we shall not be likely to err in this respect. The organist who faithfully discharges his duties renders most important help to both minister and congregation. Therefore while we carefully avoid personal display, let us not be content with anything perfunctory or half-hearted, but whether our work be elaborate or simple, let our aim be, to make it at once artistic and devotional.

Causerie of the Month.

Is an agnostic eligible for the post of organist and choir-master in a Christian church? The question is not abstract or hypothetical; it was raised very practically the other day, and gave considerable trouble to a minister of my acquaintance. Among the candidates for the appointment at his church was a young man of excellent musical capability, and as to whose personal character the gentlemen whom he named as reference spoke in the highest terms. But the minister, in a private interview, asked, not unnaturally, whether there was anything to hinder the candidate, in event of being elected, joining the Church. The candidate asked whether that was a necessary condition, and the minister, while not asserting its necessity, said that it was desirable, and remarked that on Communion Sunday it would look a little odd if the organist were conspicuously among the non-communicants. Whereupon the candidate frankly told his interlocutor that he could not conscientiously become a member of the Church; that, in fact, he was an agnostic. It appears that having been brought up in a Christian home, and having passed through a spiritual crisis as the result of an evangelistic mission, he had gradually, without malice, without moral lapse, come to doubt the cardinal articles of Christian belief, and had at last become, not an infidel, nor an atheist, nor a scoffer, nor an opponent of the moral teaching of Jesus, but simply one who felt, on the great questions of religion—the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Hereafter—he knew not anything. My friend the minister told me that the candidate spoke of all this without the sceptic's usual aggressiveness and offensiveness, but with a sobriety and an evident earnestness which could not but win sympathy. Yet, as pastor of the Church, the minister felt it his duty to advise the committee that this candidate, in other respects so well fitted for the post, was not a fit and proper object of their election.

Was the minister right? I confess that I should be interested to learn the opinion of some of the clerical readers of this JOURNAL. As for myself, I am inclined to sit on the fence. On the one hand, it certainly seems incongruous that one should hold office in a Christian Church, not agreeing with the beliefs to which the Church owes its existence. On the other hand, the religious opinions of an organist do not necessarily affect his capacity to fulfil his duties as an organist. An aggressive atheist, who flouted religion and hindered the minister's work, would certainly be out of place; but not necessarily a man like this, who would keep his opinions or lack of opinions to himself. And here

is another point. There is many an organist, not a whit superior in life and doctrine, indeed far inferior, to this unfortunate candidate, who, by a little tact, by a lack of conscientiousness, has accepted office without scruple and without objection. In the Church of England, for instance, a man has only to say he is a "communicant" to be eligible for any appointment. The assumption is that he is honest and sincere, an assumption not always justified. An organist told me not long ago that he was a blank atheist, though his clergyman did not know it. I have no space in this causerie to continue the subject, but it would certainly be interesting to know what the general feeling is upon it.

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The morals of organists and singers seem to have been aspersed for many generations, and it is impossible that the charges made against them should be altogether unfounded. Yet they do not appear to have lost their places. Here, for instance, is Bishop Earle, writing two hundred and sixty years ago, declaring that "the common singing-men in cathedral churches are a bad society, that roare deep in the Quire, deeper in the Taverne. They are the eighth part of speech, which goe to the Syntaxis of Service, and are distinguish't by their noyses much like Bells, for they make not a Consort but a Peale. Their pastime or recreation is prayers, their exercise drinking, yet herein so religiously addicted that they serve God ofttest when they are drunke. . . . Though they never expound the Scripture, they handle it much, and pollute the Gospell with two things, their Conversation, and their Thumbe. Upon worky-dayes they behave themselves at Prayers as at their Pots, for they swallow them doune in an instant. Their Gownes are lac'd commonly with streamings of ale, the superfluities of cups or throat above measure. Their skill in melody makes them the better companions abroad, and their Anthemes abler to sing Catches. Long-liv'd for the most part they are not, especially the base, they overflow their banke so oft to drowne the Organs. Briefly, if they escape arresting, they die constantly in God's service; and to take their death with more patience, they have Wine and Cakes at their Funerall, and now they keepe the Church a great deale better, and helpe to fill it with their bones as before with their noise."

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It is not often perhaps that the doings and disagreements of musical dissenters find a place in serious literature, and I observe that a recent lecturer before the Musical Association, while waxing indignant at some slips which he accused George Eliot of making, did not refer to a passage or two where that great writer hits off one of the weaknesses of "chapel" people, as she saw them fifty years ago. A Congregational minister, for example, has to listen to one of his deacons, a grocer named Nuttwood, complaining "about the obstinate demeanour of the singers, who had declined to change the tunes in accordance with a change in the selection of hymns, and had stretched short metre into long out of pure wilfulness and defiance, irreverently adapting the most sacred monosyllables to a multitude of wandering quavers, arranged, it was to be feared, by some musician who was inspired by conceit rather than by the true spirit of

psalmody. 'Brother Nuttwood,' said the minister in a faint voice, wiping the perspiration from his brow and bald crown, 'we must be content to carry a thorn in our sides while the necessities of our imperfect state demand that there should be a body set apart and called a choir, whose special office it is to lead the singing, not because they are more disposed to the devout uplifting of praise, but because they are endowed with better vocal organs, and have attained more of the musician's art. . . . Singers, specially so called, are, it must be confessed, an anomaly among us who seek to reduce the Church to its primitive simplicity, and to cast away all that may obstruct the direct communion of spirit with spirit.' 'They are so head-strong,' said Mr. Nuttwood, in a tone of sad perplexity, 'that if we dealt not warily with them, they might end in dividing the Church, even now that we have had the chapel enlarged. Brother Kemp would side with them, and draw the half part of the members after him. I cannot but think it a snare when a professing Christian has a bass voice like Brother Kemp's. It makes him desire to be heard of men; but the weaker song of the humble may have more power in the ear of God.' And then the worthy grocer was scandalised by the blunt question of a young man who had entered in time to hear his speech. "'Do you think it any better vanity to flatter yourself that God likes to hear you, though men don't?'" I am afraid that many an old-fashioned dissenter would hardly be able to appreciate the delicious irony of the whole passage, upon which comment could be supplied from actual events in plenty.

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The lecturer above referred to took George Eliot to task for describing a pause in a conversation as a "long organ stop," asserting that the writer evidently did not know what an organ stop is. The lecturer has himself been taken to task by a contemporary, who argues that George Eliot simply meant a pause, and knew as much about music as her critic. It is perfectly certain that the novelist was fond of music, and had some skill in it; her letters and journals contain many references to her attendance at concerts, and we read of her playing Beethoven duets with her stepson. But I do not think there is any evidence to justify the belief that George Eliot had an intimate acquaintance with the technique of music. The references alluded to are almost all bare records of the concerts she attended, and the artists she heard; there is surprisingly little of criticism or even of appreciation. And I must confess to a doubt whether she quite knew what she meant when she wrote of a "long organ stop." She may have compared the silence to a pause in organ music because of the organ-like timbre of beautiful Gwendolen Harleth's voice; but I submit that to use a technical term of fixed connotation in a totally unfamiliar sense is at least ambiguous, and ambiguity, as the school manuals tell us, is one of the common faults of style.

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The fault I find with the lecturer before mentioned is that his lecture was not worthy of the subject. He was more anxious to raise a smile than to deal seriously with a serious subject. He confined his attention almost wholly to the smaller fry among novelists, the

prolific ladies whose works are not in any sense literature, and who might be caught tripping in their grammar as often as in their musical references. It is strange, however, that even the aristocracy among novelists sometimes fall into the most ludicrous errors when dealing with the sister art. The subject is too large to be discussed here, but I may just mention that, of all men, Thomas Hardy, whose reputation as a literary artist is assured to a posterity which will never hear of "Rita," has perpetrated (so it seems to me) an amusing blunder. The scene is a village choir-practice. The curate, who is choirmaster, after two false starts, one because the tenors and basses had omitted to clear their throats, the second to correct their pronunciation from "Honwerd Christen sojers" to "On-wed Christing soljaws"—the curate suggests that they had better *solfa* the tune, and begins "*Sol-sol! fa! fa! mi—*" Mr. Hardy does not tell us the name of the tune, but there can be little doubt that it is the familiar one in common use; if so, it is perfectly clear that the novelist has not mastered Mr. Curwen's primer. The reception of the curate's effort is amusing enough:—

"I can't sing like that, not I," said Sammy Blore, with condemnatory astonishment. 'I can sing genuine music like F and G, but not anything so much out of the order of nater as that.'

"Perhaps you've brought the wrong book, sir?" chimed in Haymoss, kindly. 'I've knowed music early in life and late—in short, ever since Luke Sneap broke his new fiddle-bow in the wedding psalm, when Pa'son Wilton brought home his bride (you can mind the time, Sammy?—when we sung "His wife, like a fair fertile vine, her lovely fruit shall bring," when the young woman turned as red as a rose, not knowing 'twas coming). I've knowed music ever since then, I say, sir, and never heard the like o' that. Every martel note had his name of A, B, C, at that time.'

"Yes, yes, men; but this is a more recent system!"

"Still, you can't alter a old-established note that's A or B by nater," rejoined Haymoss, with yet deeper conviction that Mr. Torkingham was getting off his head. 'Now sound A, neighbour Sammy, and let's have a slap at Christen sojers again, and show the Pa'son the true way!'"

CORNO INGLESE.

The Organist to the Preacher.*

[THE article in last month's JOURNAL, from the Pulpit to the Choir, has brought us several replies. We can only find room for the following. We need hardly add that "Preacher" is quite unknown to the writers.]

MY DEAR SIR,—I duly received your letter, which I read to the choir at our next meeting, as you requested. It was received with the respect which every communication from you inspires, but I could not prevail upon my singers to send you any other message than their thanks. It therefore falls to me, almost against my will, to reply to your letter, not for controversy's sake, but because its subject is one of great importance, and also because I cannot fail to see in

your treatment of it some implications which I feel bound, on behalf of church musicians generally, to traverse. And if my reply should strike you as unduly critical, I am sure you will acquit me of any wish either to hurt your feelings, to depreciate preachers as a body, or to make an attack upon religion.

Permit me to say first of all that I have failed, after several perusals, to detect what is the precise point of your letter. You begin by suggesting an opposition between preaching and music which, so far as I am aware, has never been entertained; certainly your own choir has never given a hint of it. You proceed to discuss an alleged want of variety in church music, interpolate what I cannot but think a somewhat ironical piece of advice to the organist, and return to the choir with an accusation that their singing exhibits a jerkiness and unevenness which is detrimental to congregational praise, and which you ascribe to an illegitimate straining after effect. Finally, you return to your first topic, and close with a paragraph which shows a certain sympathy with the choir, and which is only disfigured by that same suggestion of a spirit of opposition between choir-pew and pulpit. I am forced to the conclusion (though I am by no means sure that I am right) that the essence of your letter is contained in the beginning and the end, that you have conceived the idea of this opposition, that it hurts you, and that your letter is in some respects a solatium to your *amour propre*—I use the word inoffensively. It will, therefore, be well to examine into the grounds of this, as I conceive, mistaken idea of yours, as well as to discuss the question you yourself raise.

But before doing so I must devote a word, or two to what seem to me the incidental parts, the small change, in your letter. Your accusation as to want of variety in church music—as contained in your somewhat unkind reference to "O taste and see" in "shrill soprano," and to the songs which (with charming unclerical unconventionality) you call "chestnuts"—I cannot but think, with all deference, was made rather hastily. Apart from the unkindness of singling out the soprano for an epithet which might have hurt the feelings of your own leading soprano, I must deny the accuracy of your statement. You mention merely a few songs, which, I admit, have done duty often, perhaps too often. You ignore altogether the oratorios, the numerous sacred cantatas, the numberless anthems, which pour in a never-ending stream from the publishers' offices. You forget, too, that the meagreness of our resources is as often as not due to the apathy, if not downright antagonism, of the church authorities. You have lost sight of the long struggle we had before we could induce the deacons to sanction the use of anthems, of the long haggling which ensued before they would vote a grant for the purchase of anthem-books, and of the persistence with which they have vetoed my proposal for the occasional rendering of anthems not contained in our book. But, putting that aside, you are surely aware that people have their favourites among sacred pieces, and not unfrequently ask for the repetition of them. And you will not think me unkind when I say that many an anthem will bear repetition better than a sermon.

* See "The Pulpit addressing the Choir," page 11 of the January number.

Your advice to the organist to give a recital "all by himself" to those who "pretend to like music," touches my palate with a spice of irony which I do not find very agreeable. "All by himself," indeed! for you know that organ music makes no appeal to the popular taste: the people must have vocal music. And I cannot but feel hurt at the implication that my work suffers from lack of a motive. If an organist is dull, slack, and unenterprising, it may usually be ascribed to the indifference of the people, who treat him much as though he were the handle of a mechanical organ, incapable of receiving inspiration or of accomplishing more than its dreary round of routine.

I pass from that to your charge that the choir cultivates a jerky and uneven style, strains after effect, and spoils the singing of the congregation. You must excuse me, but that really is nonsense. The decay of congregational singing—where there is decay, for it is by no means universal, as some recent Jeremiahs would wish us to believe—is due to little but laziness. None but a very badly trained choir would be guilty of jerkiness. "Straining after effect" reduces itself to an attempt to give due expression to the words; and as to the faulty expression marks of which you justly complain, the organist hates them, and they are due, more often than not, to clerical editors, the very preachers whose cause you are championing.

Now I come to the crux of your letter, the alleged antagonism between choir and preacher. Do you not think it possible that this is a fiction of your imagination? I never knew or heard of a choir which set itself up as rival to the preacher, or expressed, hinted, or conceived a wish to supplant him. I have heard a choir occasionally grumble when a minister has shortened the hymns and cut out the anthem, for the sake of prolonging or to avoid curtailing the sermon; but that is another story.

Since, however, you have thought fit spontaneously to compare the attractive power and the relative importance of sermon and music, I am disposed to join issue on the subject. You yourself have naturally a professional prejudice in favour of preaching, just as I have a professional preference for the music. We may neither of us hit the exact truth about the matter, but the discussion may perhaps enlarge at once our knowledge and our mutual sympathy.

To begin with, don't you think you have put the subject on a rather low level, treated it from that sordid standpoint with which Dissenters are so often reproached, by making your test the numerical size of the congregation? It is not always the best-filled church that exerts the most wholesome influence. And as to attractive power and popularity, a minister is not necessarily good because he is popular, any more than a popular song-writer need be a good composer, or a popular novelist a good writer. And I have indeed heard ministers now living called mountebanks, who attract by their mirth-provoking sallies rather than their virtues. Besides, your logic is defective. Because Congregationalists and other Dissenters have inherited from their Puritan forefathers a high regard for the sermon, it does not follow that the sermon ought, by right, to take so prominent and overshadowing a place

in the service as it commonly takes. The larger half of religious people are not Puritans. In the Church of England we find that the sermon is not exalted above the rest of the service, and there are innumerable well-attended churches to which the music and the liturgy, and not the sermon, are the potent attraction. Your statement that you know churches with first-rate choirs, and yet badly attended, is of little value, for it simply proves that the people who love sermons do not find there what they expect, while the religious people who have not inherited the same regard for sermons are already worshippers elsewhere.

But let us get away from this business of counting heads. You will, I am sure, pardon me when I say that arguing with a minister is extremely difficult, because when hard pushed he can always shelter himself behind what one may call the "benefit of clergy." To call preaching a "divinely appointed means of grace" is to remove the question out of the arena. Nevertheless, the subject may be looked at from a common-sense point of view, for, though appearances are sometimes to the contrary, there is surely no antagonism between religious questions and common sense. Looking at it in this way, we see that ministers themselves are continually deploring the meagre results of their preaching. A notable preacher ages ago spoke of the "foolishness of preaching" (and the word translated "foolishness" means foolishness, absurdity, insipidity); I have heard you yourself say that a minister's best sermon is his consistent, virtuous life. And if we go to literature, we find the Rev. Rufus Lyon, in George Eliot's "Felix Holt," saying, groaningly, of one of his flock, "This woman has sat under the Gospel all her life, and she is as blind as a heathen, and as proud and stiff-necked as a Pharisee;" while Addison, in one of his *Spectators*, notes that "we frequently see people lulled asleep with solid and elaborate discourses of piety;" and George Eliot in another place remarks on "the brisk and cheerful air which a sermon is often observed to produce when it is quite finished"—all showing, from the lay standpoint, that a sermon may neither be exhilarating nor improving. The intellectual sermon, when it is not over the heads of the congregation, tends to encourage criticism rather than a virtuous life; and as to emotional sermons, the danger is that the enthusiasm created will quickly burn itself out, leaving but gray, cold ashes. I would not for the world have you imagine that I am now throwing a lance at sermons in general; I am merely pointing out defects and dangers which ministers themselves, when they do not look at the matter with their blind eye, sorrowfully admit to exist.

Turning now to music, I have first to say that it is not subject to the same defects and dangers as preaching. It neither raises nor attempts to solve any problems; it is free from the dreadful responsibility of the effort to bring within the comprehension of the intellect high and eternal subjects beyond its grasp; it appeals to the emotions, and to these in their purity and simplicity, unmixed with intellectual notions which are so largely dependent on words, and with the distinctions of right and wrong, belief and unbelief. It is in this sensuous quality of music that its real value lies—a hard saying to you, sir, I fear, and yet one

that I believe is profoundly true. It may seem strange that music should have an ethical effect—in other words, should tend to glorify God and make for righteousness when it can make no direct appeal to the conscience, and cannot concern itself with the deliberate inculcation of virtue and reprehension of vice. But that it has this tendency has been recognised by men of the most varying temperaments and powers, of the most widely separated ages and nationalities. Listen to Charles Lamb, one of the purest, tenderest, wisest souls God ever made: "Man," he says, "is not a creature of pure reason—he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic countries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your Quaker spirit of unsensualising would have kept out." There is heresy for you, there is popery; but believe me, sir, it is *truth*. Hear Plato, a man who, centuries before Christ, anticipated Christian ethics and even Christian essential doctrine to a most remarkable extent: "Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul graceful of him who is rightly educated; and also because he who has received this true education of the inner being will most shrewdly perceive omissions or faults in art and nature; and with a true taste, while he praises and rejoices over and receives into his soul the good, and becomes noble and good, he will justly blame and hate the bad, even before he is able to know the reason why." Hear what Sir Thomas Browne says: "For myself I am obliged to maintain that even that vulgar and tavern music which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion and a profound contemplation of my Maker; there is something in it of divinity more than the ear discovers." And, lest you think these quotations the less striking because they are the utterances of laymen, here is a bit from one of your own favourites among ministers, Charles Kingsley: "Music is a pattern and type of heaven, and of the everlasting life of God which perfect spirits live in heaven—a life in harmony with each other and with God." I think you will admit, after reading these extracts,* that music may and must have a real influence on men's lives. I do not go further, and say that it must have as great an influence as preaching, because it is against this unnecessary, futile, and unwise comparison that I have, though feebly, written here my protest.

I have already occupied too much of your time, and must now in a very few words bring my remarks to a focus. Do not let us hear any more about an opposition between preaching and music. Each has its office; "there are diversities of gifts"; it is "divinely appointed" for some men to preach, for others to sing. Let music have a chance to accomplish her perfect work. She has been cramped, hide-bound, despised, reviled; the Puritans locked the organ, and the church door at the same time, so that none should run away from the sermon; they rapped the schoolboy's knuckles if he

was inattentive to the minister, and flogged him soundly for whistling on Sunday. We are changing all that. Let our Dissenting ministers recognise that worship and praise are as important parts of the service as the sermon; let them open their eyes to the fact that music, without words—orchestral music, music of "stringed instruments and pipes"—has a place in God's service; and let them begin by training their deacons and their congregation to regard and treat the organist, not as a hireling to be cuffed at pleasure, but as a fellow-worker; the choir, not as an assemblage of radicals, Adullamites, and innovators, but as earnest workers, who want scope for the exercise of their highest functions; and the music, not as a stop-gap, something to fill up the time between 11 and 12.30, something to drown the tinkle of the "weekly offering," but as a power of God, a quickener of man's innermost nature, a sweet influence breathing on men's souls, and filling them with hope, joy, love, and a yearning after a far-off perfection realised only in the "abode where the eternal are."

Believe me, with sincere respect,
YOUR ORGANIST.

To the Editor of THE NONCONFORMIST MUSICAL JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—I cannot help thinking that a letter such as that of "Preacher" in your last issue is calculated to do harm rather than good to the cause of psalmody. The impression left on the mind after reading it is surely this, that in the opinion of "Preacher" all choirs are a necessary evil; and at heart in direct antagonism to their ministers; also, that the chief function of usefulness in a choir is comprised in giving a concert on Sunday evenings before the service. At one moment the writer heaps abuse upon the choir, and at the next patronises them, urging somewhat sarcastically that opportunities should be afforded "even the insignificant member of the choir to distinguish himself."

Now I think it a great pity for anyone to write in such a strain. Differences of opinion on any subject will, of course, always exist, but surely when suggestions are made by Christian people, and especially by ministers, they should be couched in a kind and Christianlike spirit. The whole of "Preacher's" letter seems to me to be characterised by hasty, intemperate, and illogical writing. Why need it be necessary to entertain either of the courses suggested in his question: "Is the singing to be supplementary to the preaching, or is the sermon to be an appendage tacked on to the music?" I consider both of these propositions to be degrading to choir and minister alike. Yea, and to the congregation too, for the choir-members are really drawn from the congregation to form a nucleus of musical talent sufficient to lead the body of the people in the exercise of song. To infer, on the one hand, that hymn-singing is supplementary to the sermon and not a devout act of worship; and on the other, that the onerous and serious functions of a minister are less in importance than the duties of a choir, is at once an insult to the intelligence of all thinking people.—Believe me, yours faithfully,

J. R. GRIFFITHS.

Brixton.

"A Presbyterian Organist" and "A Chorister" also write in very much the same strain, but want of space will not allow us to print their letters.

* I owe the last two to an article by T. T. Munger in the *Century Magazine* for December, 1895.

Sabbath School Efficiency through Music.

BY LOUIS D. EICHHORN.

SURELY music is coming to the front. Its power in making mankind better is beyond all human estimate. Wherever music is employed and properly managed, it means efficiency. What is such "proper management?" is the question before us. How is the music to be an effectual agency for good in the Sabbath-school?

In order that music may make a Sabbath-school efficient, there must be—First, participation in the musical part of the service. Here comes at once an objection which is frequently urged by some and which we must meet, viz., that they "cannot sing." Let it be remembered that taking part in a musical service does not necessarily imply vocality. Those who manipulate instruments are as truly participants as they who sing. So, also, are those persons who, with song-book in hand and song-bird in heart, strive to get themselves into a receptive mood—to think right and to feel right. A recent writer has beautifully said, and truthfully too, that "God has created a singing bird in every human heart. This bird is music. The lips may give out no melody, but in the heart of every man this bird of song sits and sings its pæan of hope and cheer." Say some, "We cannot read the music." Well, the words were written before the music, and perhaps you can read the words. By reading and following carefully the words, while others sing, one gets the thought of the hymn, or the poem, and gradually, by associating words with the various kinds of notes and other characters, which are in themselves but dead signs, these signs will acquire a meaning; we will come to appreciate their values, and to recognise the purpose of the music, which is to emphasise the words, and to render more impressive the thought contained in them. Thus does the individual obtain ability. But there is another reason why everyone should participate in the musical part of the service, which is perhaps of greater importance than those given, and that is, for the sake of example. We teach not only by precept but much by example. We must set a good example for all who are about us, and most especially for the smaller children. They may not have books in hand, singing as they do, chiefly by rote, and so they are in a position to look about—which we all know that they do. Let us not think that these little ones do not observe us. We must manifest an interest in every part of the service if we expect others to do so. There must be uniformity of action. While a song is being sung, all sing, or give studious attention as above suggested. Let not some distribute papers, cards, books, etc. Let there be a time for this. While singing, there must be no listless attitude, laying aside song book, taking up some other book or paper, or sitting or standing idly by, conversing, etc. All this is positively detrimental to the efficiency of any school. What has been said concerning singing is equally true of any other part of the service, of prayer or reading. Let us not, then, by our careless indifference, discourage the song-bird within our hearts,

whose mission is to sweeten and beautify our lives, but rather yield ourselves willingly to the gentle yet powerful influence of this universal benefactor, lest by persistent opposition we render ourselves unsusceptible, and, what is still worse, deprive others, through the force of our unwise example, of that which should be to us all a means of everlasting efficiency.

Again, that music should make a Sabbath-school efficient there must be—Second, a careful, painstaking leader. He must constantly discourage, by precept and example, the common tendency to shout the songs. The class of music which is in use in some of our Sabbath-schools easily leads to this almost universal evil. Such shouting and heavy singing must not be indulged in for several reasons. First, because it is injurious to all voices, and especially to those of growing children. Second, because it encourages and actually develops a spirit of boisterousness rather than of worship. And third, because it robs the music itself of all its beauties. The above-mentioned tendency to boisterous voice-use is perhaps most successfully opposed in those public schools where music has become part of the daily work. There, one of the fundamental things is to develop the voice naturally, and to that end, soft singing and light, easy use of the voice in reading or speaking as well, is insisted upon. Through the public schools, music and song, with refining influence reaches the homes and hearts of the masses of our people as it does in no other way.

While I am not the leader of singing in our Sunday school, I sometimes take occasion to speak about voice use; I try to have the children recall the lessons impressed in day school, and they tell me, by their subsequent singing, that they have not forgotten all. The leader, then, should speak sometimes about the voice, emphasising that loud, harsh tones are not music. When a school once *knows* that this is really true, having actually heard it, the children and all will manifest a greater interest in the musical part of the service; and thus another step is gained toward our desired efficiency. The leader can also greatly extend his usefulness by keeping pleasant and happy while singing, and thus keeping happy the faces of the children. This will prove a great advantage, since it is true that the expression of the face conditions the quality of the tone of the voice. Children read faces quickly, and if the expression of the leader's face be listless and uninteresting, it will surely show itself on the faces of the school, and the tones of the voices will be sombre and unhappy. Oh! the unmistakable and incalculable benefits to humanity which spring from pure and happy thoughts, cheerful faces and bright, ringing tones of the human voice.

Again, and very briefly, there must be—Third, a reliable organist or pianist who can play with "spirit and understanding"—one who knows how to help and not hinder the whole body of singers; who, whether experienced or inexperienced will be willing to receive kindly criticism and suggestion prompted by some common sense.

As for orchestral instruments in the Sabbath-schools, widely different opinions are entertained. True it is, that they are not absolutely essential. They may, how-

ever, in the hands of careful, Christian performers, under a prudent leader, become a useful addition.

In conclusion, universal harmony must prevail. Pastor, superintendent, teacher, scholar, musician—all in tune. "A company of singers," writes one, "is like a company of brothers; the heart is opened and in the stress of song they feel themselves of one heart and of one mind." Let us see to it that we do not neglect to improve the musical part of our religious services, seeing that through God-given music we gain such power as will enable us to go from strength to strength, until "we shall be like Him," where He is.

Echoes from the Churches.

(Paragraphs for this column should reach us by the 20th of the month.)

METROPOLITAN.

HIGHBURY.—An excellent performance of Haydn's *Creation* was given in the Quadrant Church on the 16th ulto. The choir consisted of about a hundred voices, and was accompanied by a small string band (members of the Nonconformist Choir Union Orchestra), a grand pianoforte (Miss Dearden), and the organ; which was admirably and judiciously used to fill up the wind parts by Mr. E. Drewett. The soloists were Miss Emily Davies, who sang remarkably well, and was in excellent voice; Mr. Henry Piercy, who showed very great taste, as he always does; and Mr. Charles Stubbs sang the arduous baritone part in a way to give every satisfaction. Mr. Briscoe, the conductor, is to be congratulated upon the great success of this—the first—concert given by the newly-formed society.

KENTISH TOWN.—On Sunday, the 22nd December, Christmas services were held in the Congregational Church. Appropriate sermons were preached by the pastor, the Rev. D. W. Vaughan, M.A., and anthems and carols were rendered by the choir. Special mention must be made of the afternoon service, when selections from the *Messiah* were performed under the conductorship of the organist and choirmaster, Mr. Geo. H. Lawrence. The rendering of the choruses was very commendable, the attack and "go" being very good. The soloists were Miss Marianne Richards, Miss Edith Hands, Mr. J. F. Horncastle, and Mr. W. Seemer Betts, all of whom acquitted themselves most ably. Particular mention must be made of Miss Hands' expressive rendering of "He was despised," Miss Richards' "Rejoice greatly," and Mr. Horncastle's "Comfort ye" and "Every valley." Mr. E. W. E. Blandford did good service at the organ. A collection was taken on behalf of the Christmas dinner fund.

NOTTING HILL.—On Wednesday, the 15th ult., Mr. Minshall's choir gave a concert in Horbury Chapel Lecture Hall in connection with the Horbury Literary Society. Besides choruses and part songs by the choir, Miss Emily Davies sang two songs with great acceptance. Members of the choir also sang solos and duets very creditably, several of them being encored. Miss Dearden played a pianoforte solo in excellent style. She and Miss Taylor accompanied throughout the evening.

WALTHAMSTOW.—On New Year's eve an organ recital was given in Marsh Street Congregational Church by Mr. Arthur Bayliss, organist, choirmaster of Trinity Congregational, Poplar, in aid of the church choir fund. Every item of the programme which follows was received with appreciation by the audience present. Programme.—Marche Solennelle in E flat (Gounod),

Offertoire in F (Wely), Allegretto Grazioso in D (Tours), Introduction and Variations on a Theme in A (Hesse), Concert on a Lake interrupted by Storm (Neukomm), Gavotte in C (King Hall), Prelude and Fugue in G (Mendelssohn), Allegretto in C (Gade), Andante in F (Wely), Coronation March "Le Prophète," (Meyerbeer). Miss Grace Offel sang three solos during the evening.

PROVINCIAL.

BESSES, NEAR MANCHESTER.—Christmas services were held in the Congregational Church on Sunday, the 22nd December, the preacher, morning and evening, being the Rev. A. Bond, pastor. Specially selected appropriate hymns were sung, and the choir gave the following pieces:—*Morning*.—Introduction, "O come, let us worship," Horner; anthem, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come," Sir George J. Elvey; three-fold Amen. *Evening*.—Introduction, "Therefore, with angels and archangels," Smallwood. The anthem was "Christians, awake," a new composition by J. H. Maunder. The same composer's setting of the Nunc Dimittis, from his evening service, in C, was also given after the sermon. W. H. Maxfield's vesper, "Humbly on our knees," was sung, unaccompanied, at the close of the benediction. Mr. Leaver, the organist and choirmaster, directed the music.

BLAINA, MON.—The English Congregational Church Choir gave their tenth annual oratorio concert on New Year's Day at the New Wesleyan Chapel (kindly lent for the occasion), when Handel's *Messiah* was very creditably rendered. The chorus numbered about one hundred, together with the principals, Misses Sarah Anne Jenkins and Carrie H. Jones, Messrs. Herbert Williams and Thomas Hughes, accompanied by an efficient orchestra, under the leadership of Professor W. F. Hulley, of Swansea, and the organ by Mr. Daniel Williams, the whole under the baton of the Rev. David Williams (the pastor). The chorus evidenced a thoroughness of training and discipline, and reflected high credit upon their valued conductor and their own attention. The soloists discharged their duties with general satisfaction, and the orchestra (so well known) needs no comment further than saying its playing was really excellent.

BROMLEY.—On Thursday, the 16th ult., Mr. E. Minshall gave his lecture on "Nonconformist Worship Music" in the Baptist Church in connection with the Philharmonic Association. The President, the Rev. T. Nicholson, presided, and opened the proceedings by giving some useful hints and suggestions in reference to church music. A choir gave the illustrations; Mr. Bert Pearce conducting, and Mr. Collins presiding at the organ.

MIDDLESBROUGH.—The choir (ordinary) of St. George's Congregational Church won the chief choral prize of £10 and gold medal for conductor (Mr. Henry Jones) at the Cleveland and South Durham Eisteddfod, in the New Town Hall at Middlesbro', on New Year's Day. The competition was keen, and was followed by a large audience with great interest. The test piece was "He, watching over Israel" (Elijah). Contralto and bass solo prizes were won by members of above choir—Miss Varley and Mr. George M. Anderson.

OUTLANE, NEAR HUDDERSFIELD.—The annual tea meeting in connection with the Wesleyan Sunday School was held on the 4th ult. In the evening a public meeting was held in the chapel, which was attended by a large and enthusiastic audience. The chair was occupied by the Rev. G. Minedew, of Linthwaite, and excellent addresses were delivered by Messrs. John Sykes, of Crosland Moor, B. Moorhouse, and James Sykes, of Huddersfield. The choir of the chapel gave a very efficient rendering of the following selection from Handel's *Judas Maccabæus*:—

Solo, "Pious Orgies," Miss Bottomley; chorus, "O Father;" duet, "Come, ever smiling liberty," Miss Boothroyd and Miss Pilling; chorus, "Lead on;" solo, "From mighty kings," Mrs. Gee; duet, "Hail, Judea, happy land," Miss Bottomley and Mrs. Tweed, with chorus; solo, "Wise men flatt'ring," Mrs. Hoyle; solo, "Sound an alarm," Mr. Boothroyd; chorus, "We hear;" duet, "O, lovely peace," Mrs. Gee and Mrs. Wilkinson; chorus, "Hallelujah, Amen." The solos and duets were admirably rendered, and the singing of the choruses was characterised by much unanimity and vigour. Mr. J. W. Batley presided at the organ. Recitations were given by a number of the scholars in excellent style.

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JOS. JNO. ROBINSON.
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